

NATURE @ NOONTIME: Coal Ash and Wildlife: The Kingston Steam Plant Fly Ash Spill

April 2, 12 - 1 p.m.

Region II Conference Room

On December 22, 2008, the walls gave way on a massive, above-ground coal ash landfill spilling coal ash sludge over more than 300 acres near Kingston, Tennessee. The nearly five and a half million tons of sludge spread across the community, knocked one home off its foundation and damaged others. The sludge toppled trees and filled wetlands and two embayments of the Emory River. This event raised health and environmental concerns in nearby neighborhoods and miles downstream and launched a cleanup that could cost \$825 million.

TWRA was one of the first on the scene, knowing that wildlife, especially aquatic species, could be adversely affected by the spill both at the site and downstream on the Emory and Clinch Rivers. David McKinney, Chief of TWRA's Environmental Services Division and our next Nature @ Noontime presenter, will give us an overview of the spill and tell us what investigations are on-going to monitor and evaluate the damage.

Fly ash, a by-product of burning coal, contains trace amounts of arsenic, lead, mercury, beryllium and other potentially toxic substances. The Kingston Power Plant, a coal-fired electric generation station initially developed during World War II, largely to power the uranium enrichment plants used to make the world's first atomic bomb at nearby Oak Ridge National Laboratory, has been accumulating fly ash for years.

Among the Environmental Services Division's responsibilities are surveying and documenting fish kills and contaminant monitoring for mussels. Assessment of the impact of this fly ash release on wildlife resources and habitat will require repeated sampling and evaluation over the next three to five years and perhaps even longer. TWRA will be coordinating with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and other resource agencies in this process.

So come to the next Nature @ Noontime program and find out the results of TWRA's investigations and on-going monitoring and hear what the next steps are for the restoration of this devastated area.

Hosted by the I&E Department and held on the first Thursday of each month, except July, Nature @ Noontime presentations are about natural resource related topics and last about 30-45 minutes, allowing time for discussion during the allotted lunch hour. If you would like to make a presentation, if you have topics of personal interest you would like us to address, or if you know someone who offers an interesting program, contact Patricia Miller (615-781-5276) or by e-mail: Patricia.Miller@state.tn.us.